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UNITED STATES COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE BOARD

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

23 September 1955

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE USCIB SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY
COMINT PERSONNEL SECURITY STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

Subject: COMINT Personnel Security Standards and Practices.
Reference: Memo dated 18 Aug 55, subj: Announcement of Initial Meeting.

The following comments are in answer to the Chairman's specific request for information outlined in paragraph 4 of the reference:

a. Pre-access checking and background investigating procedures and practices -

Comment: USCIB is charged by the National Security Council with the formulation of US COMINT policy and the coordination of COMINT activities among all member departments and agencies. USCIB achieves coordination on matters of long-standing nature through issuance to its members of Board Directives (minimum standards). USCIB Directive No. 5, as you know, is the directive which deals with COMINT Personnel Security. USCIB member departments and agencies are responsible to USCIB for the issuance of implementing regulations and for the employment of procedures and practices in consonance with and at least equal to those minimum standards laid down by USCIB.

The Board itself normally does not become directly concerned with the actual implementation of its directives; however, its Executive Secretary, in his capacity as USCIB Security Officer, in many cases does become involved.

Although not required to do so, the USCIB Security Officer has, upon request, studied the personnel security standards and practices of a given USCIB member agency and has offered recommendations in the premises. The USCIB Security Officer is charged with arranging assistance in the investigation and clearance of persons for COMINT whenever desired by member departments and agencies.

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b. Methods of supervision, control, security education and inspection of COMINT personnel -

Comment: The USCIB Security Officer provides advice and assistance concerning COMINT personnel security matters of common concern to USCIB member departments and agencies.

c. Means by which a faulty employee's potential damage can be minimized -

Comment: (1) Through physical separation of operational projects in order to limit the COMINT knowledge of an individual to a single project or to a limited group of interrelated projects, i.e., compartmentation.

(2) Through the dissemination of individual items of COMINT on a strict "need to know" basis in recognition of the principle that an indoctrination is not, of itself, an authorization to disclose any COMINT information.

d. Conclusions as to the adequacy and/or inadequacy of present USCIB personnel security standards and practices -

Comment: USCIB standards (Directive No. 5) are based on the individual standards of the USCIB member departments and agencies for clearance and access to classified information. Adherence to standards is dependent upon practices. A future Petersen will be discovered through a security practice, never through a standard.

From discussions during previous meetings of this Committee I feel that COMINT personnel security practices are inadequate. I feel that USCIB Directive No. 5 may well be inadequate but desire to reserve judgment on that point until more detailed information on security practices becomes available.

e. Recommendations for improving said standards and practices, if deemed inadequate -

Comment: The following are recommendations for the improvement of practices. Once agreement is reached on uniform (or relatively uniform) practices it should be a simple matter to determine which of those practices should become minimum standards.

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Recommendations: (1) A pre-employment or pre-assignment screening system should be employed which would include a personal interview with the individual in order to eliminate undesirables prior to conducting expensive and time-consuming background investigations. The polygraph to be used during this phase as desired by the department or agency concerned and with the consent of the individual himself.

(2) More stringent determination of an individual's "need to know" for COMINT.

(3) The background investigation should include the requirement for a neighborhood check (including a barracks check for military personnel) in addition to normal requirements for clearance and access to TOP SECRET information. The number of listed references an investigator is required to interview need not be specifically stated. However, the number of persons, not listed in the PHS, that an investigator is required to interview should be a minimum of five.

(4) Waivers to clearance requirements which are authorized to be made by individual member departments and agencies should be made only by the USCIB member himself.

(5) Indoctrinations for COMINT should be conducted by experienced personnel.

(6) A reinvestigation should be required every two to three years. Such an investigation should include a National Agency Check, a Records Check, a review of a current Personal History Statement and a Neighborhood Check to include at least three close "working" associates and at least three social acquaintances not listed in the PHS and not otherwise indicated by previous investigation to be intimate friends.



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